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ABSTRACT

Prison education can play a positive role in challenging offending behavior of prisoners. A drop in recidivism rates can be achieved by education that works toward attitudinal change, according to programs being implemented in the United Kingdom. To ensure that staff in prison education understand the implications of working toward the reduction of offending behavior, they need to be aware of general theories of crime and have an understanding of criminology. Education should provide help for prisoners who have inadequate social skills, provide opportunities for prisoners to develop artistic and other skills to gain self-respect, to help prisoners to acquire family life skills, and to help prisoners to understand the emotions and needs of the opposite sex. In order to meet these needs, the correctional education system will have to work toward a more balanced system, stressing both academic content and attitudinal change. Moral education needs to be stressed, as well as thinking and problem-solving skills. In the future, educational programs in prisons should have three distinctive features: basic education, vocational education, and cognitive skills development. New or revamped programs should be evaluated, using such criteria as thoroughness and intensity, research base, well-trained staff, inmates selected according to risk potential, relevance to the outside world, and multifaceted approach. (Contains 11 references.) (KC)

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Mendip Papers

Prison education's role in challenging offending behaviour

Paul Ripley

Contents

1 *The role of prison education*

2 *The regime*

2 *Education services*

3 *Integration*

5 *Theory of crime*

6 *Treatment programmes*

7 *The core treatment programme for sex offenders: education's role at HMP Whatton*

8 *The supportive curriculum*

9 *Justice and fairness*

10 *Aims of moral education in the curriculum*

11 *Delivery of programmes*

13 *Evaluation*

14 *Resource availability for non-sex offender programmes*

14 *References*

The role of prison education

This paper argues that there is a positive role for education to play in challenging offending behaviour. It will not, however, be a simple task to change either the curriculum or the regime.

Educators must be aware of the tensions change will bring about. The education programme, in its philosophy and practice, should underpin the challenge. A drop in recidivism rates is possible, and much can be achieved by attitudinal changes.

To ensure that staff in prison education understand the implications of working towards the reduction of offending behaviour, they first of all need to be aware of general theories of crime and have an understanding of the study of criminology. All too frequently teachers have not concerned themselves with the circumstances that have brought the prisoners to their predicament. They have instead concentrated upon the subject matter. Counselling takes place within the confines of educational guidance and other general contributions which may, in a haphazard manner, be useful in reducing recidivism. The processes have not been directed by any understanding of the processes of crime, its causes and its effects. This is not only commonplace in respect of teaching staff but is also true for many different types of prison staff.

All members of the prison service should be aware of the theories of crime and criminology and how they relate to their practical working experience. By understanding crime it is possible to start to understand the criminal. This paper examines

attitudes towards criminal behaviour, and illustrates how education programmes may fit more readily into regimes as the curriculum becomes a force for reducing recidivism.

The regime

The Home Office White Paper **Custody, care and justice** defined the aim of the regime to be:

> To provide a better prison system. This will require more effective measures of security and control; a better and more constructive relationship between prisoners and staff; and more active, challenging and useful programmes for prisons.
> (Home Office 1991)

The Prisons Board interpretation of this has been that a particular emphasis will be placed upon work. This will not only contribute towards the cost of the service but will give inmates the work experience they need in order to lead law abiding and useful lives after release (Pilling 1992). It is important to place both the White Paper and the Prisons Board's deliberations within the general framework of national educational development.

Education is increasingly being viewed as forming a part of the economic infrastructure of society. The movement towards more vocational education, the role of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs), accreditation by National Vocational Qualification (NVQ): all these - and other indicators - show how the liberal tradition of education is on the decline. Prisons reflect this tendency no more nor less than mainstream post-16 education. In addition, prisons are becoming more conscious of their duty to give value for taxes. This relates closely to the work ethic, an ethic which believes that prisoners should contribute to their upkeep if possible and be prepared to be productive on completion of their sentences.

Education services

1993 heralds a significant change in how education is to be delivered in prisons. Its philosophy will change towards being work orientated. Its management structure will change. To ensure that there is some continuity and conformity to a national pattern, the then Director General of the Prison Service, Joe Pilling, issued guidelines to governors on the balance of regime activities (1992) indicating what will constitute education services. When these services are formally contracted out to providers the interpretation will be decided upon by governors and civil servants. How they will be monitored to ensure that the terms of the contracts are met is not yet clear. The criteria for education services outlined in Joe Pilling's guidelines to governors highlighted the need for those services to:

- provide appropriate help for those prisoners who have inadequate social skills;
- provide opportunities for prisoners to develop artistic and other skills to gain a sense of personal achievement and self respect;
- provide opportunities for prisoners to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for a satisfactory family life;
- help prisoners to understand the emotional needs of the opposite sex.

Clearly, the educational programme should focus upon the area of social dissonance, as inadequate social skills obviously include offending. There is no reason why much if not all of the curriculum cannot actively support this focus on order to challenge offending behaviour.

Providers of education services in prisons need to take positive steps towards working with programmes designed to address offending behaviour. This requirement is certain to be included in the programme contracted by the prison governor with his/her area manager. Prisons are grouped into geographical areas with a senior governor having overall responsibility to the director general of the Prison Service for his or her area. The area managers draw up a contract which becomes the measure by which an institution's effectiveness and the governor's performance is measured. The prison governor's contract is reviewed annually by the area manager. Function 17 of the contract is the part which relates to educational and library activities. Governors will be including in Function 17 of their contract, or its

equivalent on re-definition of the contract, the addressing of offending behaviour.

The relevant criteria are as follows:

1. Is the educational programme targeted at offending behaviour problems or other problems that are prevalent amongst prisoners (e.g. alcohol and drug abuse) directly impacting on offending?

2. Are the contents of the programme and the techniques to be used clearly defined? Is the justification for believing that the programme is likely to be effective in reducing levels of re-offending (or in offering other tangible benefits to the offender or the establishment) clearly stated?

3. Does the programme give priority to those prisoners who have identifiable needs in the problem area and appear at greatest risk of re-offending?

4. Is the programme properly structured and managed? Is it adequately resourced to provide consistency and continuity of treatment? Is its delivery part of the governor's contract with his or her area manager?

5. Have staff conducting the programme received appropriate training?

6. Is the programme for the individual prisoner part of a sentence plan which will address other major problem areas that the offender may have?

7. Is the programme being evaluated? Or is information about e.g. programme delivery and observed results being collected so that independent evaluation would be possible?

8. Does the programme provide for further work to be done on the release of the offender - e.g. by the probation service or voluntary agencies - to assist rehabilitation and help prevent relapse?

For education staff to be fully effective both in the provision of education and offence focused work, the departments will have to move towards more supportive, integrated modes of educational delivery rather than being a discrete service providing for clearly identified academic or vocational aims.

To achieve this integration, educators need to join the debate on crime. This debate uses such phrases as 'community', participation', 'group work', 'interdepartmental co-operation'. These phrases imply a co-ordinated effort within prisons but a closer look at the reality of the situation will show wasteful duplication, policy confusion and differences.

To enable a relatively novel initiative to be implemented, when it is potentially fraught with danger, the education service must ensure it is able to contribute to the innovation and that the institution accepts the innovation. This will only occur if there is a fusion of the different parts of the regime.

Integration

Miles (1965)) suggested that:

> A healthy organisation not only survives in its environment, but continues to cope adequately over the long haul and continuously develops and extends its surviving and coping abilities.

Miles defined three dimensions:

- goal focus,
- communications adequacy,
- optimal power equalisation.

The organisation contracted to provide education must ensure it is aware of these dimensions and is able to adjust the education programme to their needs.

Goals must be achievable with existing or available resources and must also be appropriate - i.e. more or less congruous with the demands of the environment. The education manager will need to establish the resources needed to support and develop offence focus programmes and to ask the following questions:

- Are there resources?
- Where have they come from?
- What are the consequences of using them?

It may well be that the consequences in terms of the education programme are such that either more resources (extremely unlikely) or a change of programme (more likely) are the two options available.

Communications need to be adequate. Prisons as organisations are not renowned for their excellence of communications. They are not distortion free. Information should travel both vertically/horizontally and also in and out of the institution. People need to have sufficient information and should be prepared to give information. Only if there are good communications could such sensitive work be started.

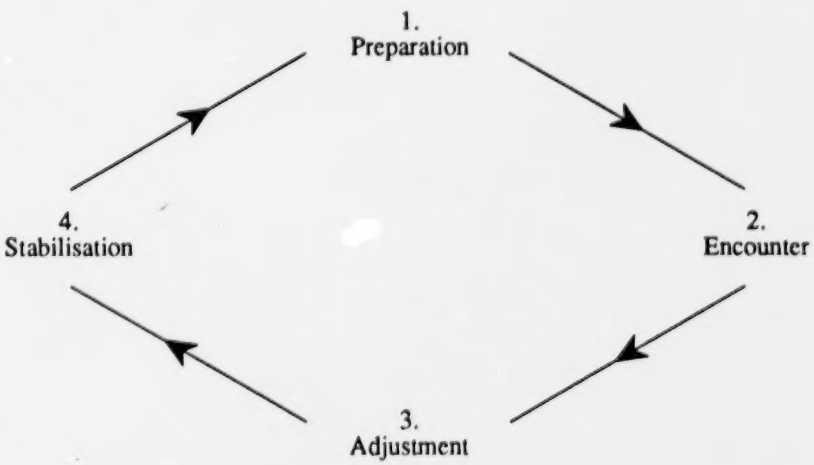
If there are good communications systems, there is a play for **optimal power equalisation**. Miles argued that subordinates should be able to exert influence upwards and, even more importantly, perceived that their boss should also be able to influence upwardly with his or her boss. If these situations exist in the organisation, there will still be intergroup struggles - that is only natural. But there will not be the same scope for explicit or implicit coercion. Is this possible in a prison? Will the post-April 1993 arrangement allow the on-site co-ordinator of education the autonomy vital to attain optimal power equalisation or will the tendering process diminish the autonomy and power availability? The very basis of the hierarchical nature of prison management has been to use more or less coercive means to achieve ends. The use of resources as a coercive tool of management is a common practice.

Such implications concerning the organisation's health should be considered when the role of education is about to be altered - especially if it becomes a role which has not traditionally been seen to be education or which other groups believe to be rightfully theirs.

McDougall *et al* (1992) suggested that any organisational change will go through a number of stages (see **Figure 1**).

Following this model, the introduction of behaviour modification or offence focus programmes must, in the preparation stage, be seen by teachers as enhancing their role. They may feel frustration through losing a piece of work they have always enjoyed. The introduction of offence focus work should be done in an imaginative fashion, by management supporting staff in developing a new dimension to their work. This should minimize the loss felt when a traditional part of the programme is replaced by offence focus work.

Figure 1: Stages in organisational change



The encounter period, when staff first start working on the offence focus programme, can create uncertainty for everyone. McDougall's view was that if this stage is viewed as a problem, it will create problems, whereas if it is seen as a challenge it has a chance of success. The support of management is essential, and stress must be recognised and cared for.

During the adjustment stage staff should be able to firm up their work. For the teacher this means re-evaluating exactly what is comprised by the curriculum. Changes in the working environment will be evident.

At the stabilisation stage staff understand what they are doing, have defined their roles and are contributing efficiently. In education departments the offence focus work should be an integral part of the curriculum - indistinguishable from any other work by the support and commitment given to it by either management or staff.

Theory of crime

For a fuller understanding of the role of prison education it is necessary to define and examine what teachers, within their professional role, should expect to know about the offences of their students and the theory of crime.

Wolford (1990) saw that educators, who constitute one of the largest specialised professional groups within corrections (prisons), have been viewed as part of an institution within an institution. This remote role needs to be challenged. Teachers have a role which goes beyond the pedagogic. The offence should not be ignored. The prisoner's criminal and social record is not information that is available to only a few members of the institution. Teachers need to know more about the offence and its perpetrator. They need to be aware that:

- offending is part of a wider, more persistent social/psychological deficit;
- these other psychological/social deficits (e.g. re employment, education and social relationships) may therefore have equal legitimacy as targets for a specifically prison 'treatment'; and
- that it may be possible to begin to describe the nature of such treatment on the basis of the underlying features of anti-social conduct in general.

This calls for a rethinking of the professional role of the teacher. Traditionally the teacher has played a tutor/counsellor role. Subject matter has been delivered in a variety of modes. The effective teacher carrying out offence focus work needs to have a professionalism which has its roots in criminology, sociology and human behaviour. The perception that education is the only area of solace for the prisoner needs to be set right. Prisoners need to know that whatever they do for their education is simply a part of the whole that will be freely shared with other colleagues both inside and outside the prison. This may be uncomfortable for some teachers, but it is vital.

As a basis for professional development teachers need to know about the nature of crimes and criminality. This will enable them to understand the basis of development in the offence focus programmes. A starting point for discussion would be in the general theory of crime.

Criminality

Gottfredson and Hirsch (1990) suggested that criminal acts provide immediate, easy or simple gratification of desires. They provide money without work, sex without courtship, revenge without court delays. A major characteristic of people with low self-control is a tendency to respond to the immediate environment, to have a 'here and now' orientation. People lacking in self-control also tend to lack diligence, tenacity, or persistence in a course of action. This does not in itself imply a propensity towards criminal activity. It does imply that a higher degree of self-control has a modifying effect upon criminal behaviour. Low self-control can lead to an immediate reaction rather than a reasoned response. Much criminal action is reactive. Proactive criminality is a minority activity.

Criminal acts are exciting, risky or thrilling. They involve stealth, danger, speed, agility, deception, or power. People lacking in self-control tend, therefore, to be adventuresome, active and physical.

Crimes provide few or meagre long-term benefits. Criminality is not equivalent to a job or a career. On the contrary, crime interferes with long-term commitments to jobs, marriages, family or friends. Thus, people with low self-control tend to have unstable marriages, friendships and job profiles. They tend to be little interested in or unprepared for long-term occupational pursuits.

Crime requires little skill or planning. The cognitive requirement for most crimes is minimal. It follows that people lacking in self-control need not possess or value cognitive or academic skills. The manual skills required for most crimes are minimal. People who are prone to criminal acts need not possess manual skills that require training or apprenticeship.

Crimes often result in pain or discomfort for the victim. Property is lost, bodies are injured, privacy is violated, etc. There is a tendency for people with low self-control to be self-centred, indifferent or insensitive to the sufferings and needs of others. It does not follow that people with low self-control are unkind or antisocial. On the contrary, they may discover the immediate and easy rewards of charm and generosity. Since crime involves the pursuit of immediate pleasure, it follows that people who lack self-control will also be likely to pursue immediate pleasures that are not criminal. They will tend to smoke, drink, use drugs, gamble and engage in illicit sex.

Understanding the nature of criminality may prepare staff for the difficulties they will face in delivering an educational programme of offence focused work. It will need to be delivered with a new set of skills. The teacher must have counselling and directive skills as well as academic skills if the offender is to benefit.

Treatment programmes

Treatment can be defined as the concept that comprises everything we do consciously to influence the inmate's ability to refrain from criminal activity in the future. This implies that the way staff deal with inmates in daily life, the physical layout of prisons and the entire prison regime are important elements in the treatment programme. This concept is struggling to emerge in English and Welsh prisons.

Little has been produced as yet in terms of generic treatment programmes for offenders. Much has been done, and is still being done, in the treatment of sex offenders. Generally this has followed a medical model - such as that at HMP Grendon - but more recently a behavioural model has been developed, particularly in those prisons with specialist provision for sex offenders. This development, initiated by the Directorate of Inmate Programmes in the Home Office, is a useful model to examine when considering the introduction of a general offence focus programme.

The key factor is how does education fit into this picture. What type of curriculum should be developed?

The curriculum

Wright (1989) suggested that:

> Though teachers are themselves moral agents, with their own commitment to moral values, they at present lack a clear and agreed understanding of what it means to be professionally concerned with moral education.

Offence focus work is all about moral education. Moral education, along with counselling, should replace the subject matter traditionally seen as the major plank of the prison educator's professional response.

Wright explored the concept of a framework for moral education to be the basis of post-16 education. Wright argued that a framework drawing upon the principles he alluded are sometimes lacking in colleges should form the basis of the implicit relationship between student and teacher. Wright's framework for moral education would, with some minor adjustments for the penal environment, provide a set of principles capable of being used in offending behaviour programmes. These principles would underpin the direct challenges offered to offenders by educating and training them in a community which offers work support as its basis for development.

The major difficulty would be in ensuring that the principles are understood and adhered to by all grades and types of staff. Education can take a

lead role by offering a morally educative curriculum.

An adapted version of Wright's model is suggested as a framework for much of the curriculum activities in prisons. However, the curriculum must be in sympathy with the offence focus programme. It is worthwhile examining the core treatment programme for sex offenders to date. This is a national programme, frequently run by multi-disciplinary teams. Involvement of teachers in the programme gives an insight into how other programmes, not just those specifically devised for sex offenders, may develop.

The core treatment programme for sex offenders: education's role at HMP Whatton

This programme is committed to the concept and belief that work in prisons is effective in being able to reduce recidivism.

Education, as such, is not seen primarily as the imparting of knowledge and information. Rather, education is seen as including teaching individuals how to think, how to see the world in different ways, how to analyse and solve problems.

It is assumed that thinking can be taught, affected and changed. The work at HMP Whatton builds on the well-established principle that thinking is the basis for behaviour and that with criminality, especially sexual criminality, staff must affect those underlying thoughts and attitudes of offenders that propel them towards their criminal behaviour. What and how offenders think, how they view the world, how well they understand people, what they value, how they reason and how they attempt to solve problems all play an important role in their criminal behaviour.

The education programme at HMP Whatton is designed to support the specialist treatment programme by the inmates' acquisition of cognitive skills as well as academic, social and vocational skills. Support of the treatment programme is central to all educational development in the prison. This calls for staff to be trained and practised in counselling and criminology, and to have a good knowledge of research which correlates education and training towards the reduction of recidivism. Teaching staff must be able to:

- teach subject specialisms,
- facilitate learning,
- apply and conduct research,
- collate and distribute information,
- operate security systems,
- counsel,
- lead group work,
- train.

Above all, teaching staff and their on-site management must relate all their academic work to the offence focus programme. This academic work must - and does - pursue excellence.

The background

Molesting children or raping women are crimes which usually produce the most emotive responses in people. Popular sentiment may demand punishment such as castration as a means of stopping sex offenders from repeating their crimes.

The prison service view is that it is not possible to cure sex offenders but, with help, sex offenders can learn how to manage their sexual impulses without committing new crimes.

This has led to the development of a treatment programme focused on helping sex offenders control the cycle of troubling emotions and behaviour, distorted thinking and deviant sex fantasies that lead to their committing of sex crimes. It is essential that they come to accept responsibility for their offending. This treatment - relapse prevention - can sharply reduce the rate of sex crimes when offenders are released from prison.

The programme

Research shows that the most successful candidates for treatment are men who have no criminal record,

have an established network of family and friends, hold a job and are not so preoccupied by their sex fantasies that they dwell on them for hours a day.

These people are not necessarily the same as the prisoners at HMP Whatton. They do share similarities. Building on the similarities it is possible, as is done at Whatton, to re-educate the offenders to see the true nature of their crime, not the distorted view of it that they have developed. The programme places great importance on the offenders developing an understanding or empathy with their victims. Empathy with the victim shifts perception so that the denial of pain, even in fantasies, is difficult. Motivation to resist the old urges which led to the offending behaviour is strengthened. The distorted thinking which is used as a defence against thoughts of victims' trauma is identified. The offenders also recognise ways in which they manipulated their victims into not resisting, or not telling.

Creating empathy for the victim

Each time an offender is in a situation of high risk, or is having high risk thoughts, it is a test of their ability to manage the urges that led to crime. The actual realisation of this cannot take place at HMP Whatton. As a simulation, men on the treatment programme have to place themselves in a situation of high risk by revealing their urges to the group they are working with and then to examine their management or mismanagement of that situation.

Many of the high risk situations derive from internal thoughts linked with depressed moods into deviant sexual fantasies. Others are situations which should always be avoided. Like alcoholics abstaining from drink, no child molester should wander into a school playground.

To help develop the avoidance of high risk situations, offenders have to understand the suffering their victims endured. This is also done by self-revelation to the group. Watching videos of victims talking about the effect the offence has had on them is very effective. Child molesters often justify their actions by telling themselves, 'some children are sexually seductive,' or, 'I'm not hurting the child, just showing love.' Rapists think, 'If she resists she's playing hard to get.'

In a technique called cognitive restructuring, sex offenders learn to identify such distorted beliefs and counter them with the truth. The truth is then reflected by avoidance techniques which the offender develops with the support of the group. By these means, the whole chain of behaviour leading to the committing of a sex crime is challenged, by the individual, as the situation develops. It is hoped that by learning to check the behaviour cycle in this way, the individual will be able to develop the control of (though not a cure for) offending behaviour in order to prevent further crimes.

Underpinning the programme

All staff have a part to play in the programme. It may not be obvious, but it is vital. It is necessary to be vigilant in the use of language, expressions and any suggestion that the sex offenders' actions are understood and by implication approved. This is difficult in a predominantly male environment. Jokes, words, and/or expressions which may be sexist, or sexual in their nature must be avoided. Sexual offenders will seize upon any excuse to justify their crime. None should be given and when supporting cases all staff should challenge offenders' perceptions about women and sexuality, or let a colleague who is able to intervene know of any incident, record it and follow up with any necessary reactions.

The supportive curriculum

The way in which education staff in prisons will support the offence focused programme will be in their curriculum development. The curriculum must set standards and maintain principles synonymous with the treatment programme.

As it is often difficult for individuals to acknowledge moral failure, so it is for institutions. It is not a question of teaching what is right and what is wrong. Most people understand rules: the problem lies in accepting that those rules apply to you. In penal establishments it is a question of applying the same principles to inmates as staff would appear to apply to their behaviour with their peers. This is difficult. It is likely that most of the members of an institution, both staff and inmates, can see ways in which - in their perception - the institution as a whole fails morally, and fails unnecessarily. No institution will ever be morally

perfect, but, if moral education matters, it is important that efforts be made to reduce such failure as much as possible.

Teachers need to move from the 'pure' view of education and accept that everything that occurs within prisons has some educational value. The attitudinal change will enable staff to realise that the core moral values are not solely applicable to curricular issues. They are central to all the interpersonal relationships within the prison.

The suggestion being made here is twofold:

1. that a morally educative institution is one in which core moral values are reflected in all aspects of its life such that both inmates and staff directly experience those values in action;

2. that staff, preferably in collaboration with inmates, should examine the extent to which this is true in their own community and look for ways to make it more true.

If this task is to be undertaken, there are two sides to the coin of prison life. On the one side, there are the explicit rules, sanctioning procedures, organisational structures, and 'habitual practices'. On the other there is the quality of the relationships between inmate and inmate, inmate and staff, and staff member and staff member. It is clear that the main initiative for seeing that the two sides of community life reflect core moral values must come from the staff. What is at stake is the extent to which the institution becomes a genuine community. Each penal institution is uniquely itself. Moral values will become embedded in its life, if staff question their relationship to core moral ideas:

- to what extent are all members, including staff and prisoners, encouraged to express their views on the life of the institution and are they listened to seriously?

- to what extent can individual staff and prisoners participate in decision-making?

The necessary hierarchy of responsibility may leave little room for democratic decision-making, but we can still ask to what extent consultation occurs and, when that is impracticable, the extent to which full explanations are given for decisions.

Consideration should be given to the following questions:

- is the prisoner's right to privacy properly respected? Does security negate that respect?

- do some aspects of institutional life inevitably undermine the self-esteem of some individuals?

- is the prison able to tolerate individuality amongst the inmates?

- is there real concern for the welfare of prisoners?

- to what extent does the institution explicitly encourage respect for disadvantaged or minority groups?

Justice and fairness

Moral education involves developing a just community that sets the inmates an example of fairness, justice and equality, and which encourages them to be positively involved in the prison community.

Justice is universally accepted as a moral imperative. However, there are also powerful pragmatic reasons why we should be concerned about it. Few things are more demoralising and lead on to resentment as much as being treated unfairly and being unable to do anything about it. It is probably the most important feature of the morally educative community that all members, including both staff and inmates, should feel that they are being treated fairly.

In the prison community:

- to what extent are individuals encouraged and institutionally supported in giving expression to a sense of having been unfairly treated?

- to what extent is such expression taken seriously and responded to constructively?

- to what extent are inmates in particular helped to make such protest constructive?

- are there mechanisms for dealing with perceived injustice which all member recognise as fair?

Truthfulness

One area of possible tension in prisons is that between, on the one hand, the reciprocal roles and responsibilities of staff and inmate, and on the other, the possibility of open, honest and truthful relationships between them.

There are several aspects to consider:

- to what extent is hypocrisy present, and what forms does it take?

- to what extent are staff or inmates under pressure to pretend to opinions and feelings they do not have and even to lie?

- to what extent are the ideologies and personal beliefs of staff communicated to inmates as if they were truths?

- to what extent is it possible for members of the community to express their feelings for each other truthfully?

Keeping promises and contracts

Moral development concerns deeply ingrained and underpinning habits of action and feeling. Generally, family influences will determine these in children. The challenge is whether or not these habits can be changed later in life, especially with people who may have contrary habits to those of the teacher.

The structure and purpose of education departments in prisons imply at their heart a complex contractual relationship between teacher and teacher, teacher and inmates, as well as inmate and inmate. It is the keeping of such contracts which enables all members of the community to be engaged in a common enterprise.

The following questions need to be answered:

- to what extent are the contracts which enable the education department to fulfil its function fully understood and openly discussed by both teachers and inmates?

- to what extent are individual contracts between teacher and inmate entered into voluntarily?

- to what extent is co-operative activity encouraged, and can it be increased?

It is perhaps worth emphasising again that, although every institution has its hierarchy of responsibility and power, morality is independent of it, and cannot be identified with it.

It is important that inmates understand the concept of morality and that their development is not conforming to a system of commands requiring ritualistic obedience. Instead, institutions should develop a system of social relationship such that everyone does his or her best to obey the same obligations and does so out of mutual respect.

If challenging offending behaviour is to be successful, then moral attitudes should underpin the offence focused work. It is vital that all staff understand this and develop the curriculum towards achieving the aims of moral education.

Aims of moral education in the curriculum

There is an assumption that moral education is a form of moralising. Adults do not take kindly to being exhorted to be virtuous and being made to feel guilty by others. But the aim of moral education in the curriculum is neither to preach virtue nor to stir up guilt feelings. At the same time it is not to be implied that the teacher's role is to maintain a kind of moral neutrality, for that would be to ask teachers to suspend their own morality.

It is suggested here that the aims of curriculum work can be summarised as:

- stimulating inmates into giving expression to their own moral intuitions;

- challenging them into trying to justify their intuitions with reason;

- enabling them to share with others their reflections, to listen to others, and to struggle to resolve disagreements;

- providing them with an analytical framework within which they can examine their offending behaviour;

- helping them to apply their growing moral competence in the context of vocational experience and the workplace;

- facilitating the extending and generalising of their moral reflections beyond their own immediate experience to national and international issues.

The role of the teacher would have the following elements:

- being alert to the moral dimensions of issues which are raised by inmates or by the syllabus or the penal context and having the confidence to explore them;

- the creation of materials and the setting up of activities and tasks for inmates, either alone or in groups;

- putting questions into the discussion which challenge the positions inmates take and helping them to think more deeply;

- engaging with inmates in discussions in which teachers give expression to their moral intuitions, justifications, perplexities and uncertainties.

Curriculum activity would then be one in which teacher and inmates together are collaboratively engaged in a process of experience, reflection and learning which includes the moral dimension of work they undertake together.

Moral issues arise in contexts, and though it is possible to discuss them at a highly general level, it is often more effective to deal with them in the context in which they arise. All aspects of the curriculum give rise to such issues. The following are some illustrations:

- examining politics and economics raises questions about the fairness of investment practices, the power hierarchy and the practice of democracy;

- practice in the skills of being interviewed for a job raises questions about the moral limits of suppressing information and misrepresentation of biographical facts and personal views;

- learning about the construction industry raises question about the balance between money saving methods and the requirements of safety;

- work may bring inmates into contact with practices which they may see as immoral, but which are accepted in workplace culture.

Even if it is the case that there is a full commitment to moral issues as they arise in any aspect of the curriculum, there may still be important issues which are not covered. There should be special curriculum provision for such issues, whatever title it might be given, in order for there to be an efficient and effective delivery service well supported by adequate resources.

Delivery of programmes

The prison service has indicated that educational programmes in the future should have three distinctive features:

1. basic education,

2. vocational education,

3. cognitive skills development.

Research carried out in North America clearly indicates the effectiveness of dealing with recidivism when inmates' educational attainments reach the 8th grade standards for high school. When this is achieved in conjunction with vocational skills training, the American research suggests an approximately 20 per cent drop in recidivism in the targeted groups.

Research in the United States - McCollum (1989), Schumacker, Anderson and Anderson (1990), Finsterbusch *et al* (1990) - showed a direct positive correlation of education and training, especially

basic education, towards reducing recidivism. In the US, Imel (1989) provided an insight into employees' needs for skills and found that workers with the following skills were those sought after by employers:

- basic academic skills in reading, writing and mathematics,
- communications, speaking and listening skills,
- problem-solving ability,
- reasoning skills,
- employability skills,
- leadership ability,
- computer literacy, and
- interpersonal skills.

If, despite the cultural and economic differences between the UK and the US, employers' perceptions are similar, it would be useful to undertake North American type research programmes in England and Wales to verify the effectiveness of education and training to help reduce recidivism.

1. Basic education

There is a need to define and determine what institutions should deliver and what constitutes adult basic education in our prisons. There is an argument for basic education continuing as the cornerstone of the prison curriculum.

The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit's (ALBSU) Wordpower, a model of curriculum planning based on an individual's progress in reading, writing, communicating and comprehension skills, helps the individual to progress at varying levels appropriate to their skills. This has started to be developed as part of the core curriculum in many prisons. Prisons having a great deal of work in basic literacy have started to use Wordpower in a positive, individualised way. Its validation by City and Guilds, plus its versatility and the individual nature of its programme, have made it popular with both students and teachers. It fits the political direction (Pilling 1992), which clearly indicates that basic education will be classified and categorised as a priority in prison regimes in the 1990s. Wordpower's versatile structure, which encourages students to use staff other than the tutor or to use fellow students in order to assist in their development, is an excellent model of a curriculum that can develop moral concepts. These concepts can be tried and tested in presentations to staff or students.

There are difficulties in developing a numeracy model as effective as Wordpower. This is an urgent need that must be addressed.

2. Vocational education

The present system gives cause for concern. The relevance of some training to the realistic aspirations of inmates can be questioned. There is clearly a mismatch between what goes on in prisons and what prisoners can reasonably expect to bear fruit on release. Why train people to be rural horticultural experts in rural prisons when they are going to work in urban inner city environments far removed from plant and animal life? The contracting out of all vocational training over the next few years is the logical time for rationalisation to bring it in line with basic education. The predominance of certain types of vocational training courses - that is to say construction industry training and some of the more outdated forms of engineering - needs to be examined. If contracting out of services in prisons develops, then any rationalisation needs to ensure that outmoded training is replaced by more modern industrial practices.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) must not be seen to be the ultimate objective of the curriculum. The skills based NVQ should be developed alongside the underpinning knowledge that questions and asserts moral responsibility in the training or production workshop.

3. Cognitive skills development

This has been highlighted by the Director General as an area of development which all members of the prison service should understand and help to develop. Chief education officers' suggestions for a core prison curriculum include:

- communications,
- numeracy,
- information technology, and
- life skills.

Life skills obviously comprise the area where cognitive skills development and training for offenders would fit.

Currently Chief Education Officers Branch (CEOB) is developing a policy that will give direction to education staff.

CEOB has traditionally initiated:

- investigative programmes,
- research programmes,
- the dissemination of programmes results.

It is hoped that this will continue to be the case, although with the contracting out of prison education the new providers may wish to follow their own research or be unwilling to contribute resources towards centrally driven research programmes.

The new arrangements for education and the competitive tendering process could cause some slow down in programme development. The CEOB at the Prison Service Headquarters is being re-defined. This will probably result in its role becoming that of:

- policy determination,
- advice to prison administrators, governors etc.,
- contract monitoring.

It seems unlikely that it will have the personnel, resources or the time to initiate and maintain research programmes. This presents an opportunity for governors and education service providers to extend and explore the possibility of academic institutions other than further education colleges being involved in research. CEOB would then quite legitimately use research to formulate policy and act as a disseminator of good practice.

Evaluation

When an education department decides to initiate work directly related to or supportive of challenges to offending behaviour, it will need to evaluate the process closely. Performance criteria should be used to evaluate the programmes. Long-term evaluation is not within the resources of education staff. The lack of suitable research resources within education budgets should not deter educators from being involved in evaluation. It is possible to build relationships with other professional groups who have a research based background. Universities, psychologists, and the probation service are good examples. Co-operative work on assessment with colleagues from these groups may not only produce but enhance research into offending behaviour modification. The education staff may be a catalyst but could not realistically maintain a long-term research project. They have neither the skills nor resources. Co-operation is vital, above all co-operation with offenders who would willingly join the programme and stay with it as ex-offenders.

The following are examples of criteria which should be present:

- programmes must be thorough and intensive. They can be integral to a department's general curriculum or a specific part of that curriculum;
- programmes should be researched and based upon tested hypotheses;
- the staff involved should be well motivated, well trained and well supported. A support system that encompasses both formal and informal access to counselling is vital;
- inmates selected should be classified as needy, in terms of risk potential, rather than selected randomly;
- the programmes should relate to reality and the outside community, not to fantasy and simulation;
- programmes should be multi-faceted. They should address a range of problems, preferably with a variety of tutors, in an integrated way.

All programmes should include a module specifically designed to help cognitive restructuring. They should be reconstructionist in theory and in practice.

Resource availability for non-sex offender programmes

Most formal programmes which are adaptable to education's strengths are North American. Though well researched, prepared and presented they are in a different linguistic and cultural context. These resources need to be a part, not the whole, of the curricular underpinning of regime objectives.

Nottinghamshire Probation Service has produced a most valuable contribution based upon the work of James McQuire and Philip Priestley. **'Staying out'** (£18) is a practical pack for running a one week course for offenders. It is suitable for adaptation by teachers to support a wide range of activities. Contact Nottingham Probation Service, telephone 0602 506431.

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